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Message Text

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16
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

CU-02 DHA-02 OMB-01 /074 W
---------- 012638
P R 200905Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6683
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2914

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, KS
SUBJECT: EASTER AND ANNIVERSARY OF 1960 STUDENT UPRISING
VIRTUALLY UNMARKED BY OPPOSITION ACTIVITY

REF: SEOUL 2876

SUMMARY: IMPORTANT FIRST DAYS OF TRADITIONAL SPRING SEASON OF STUDENT AND OPPOSITION UNREST, INCLUDING EASTER AND 16TH ANNIVERSARY OF APRIL 19, 1960 STUDENT UPRISING AGAINST RHEE GOVT, PASSED VIRTUALLY WITHOUT INCIDENT AS ROKG PREEMPTED THE FIELD WITH SERIES OF WELL PLANNED MOVES. END SUMMARY.

1. HOLY WEEK AND PARTICULARLY APRIL 19, DATE WHEN 120 STUDENTS WERE KILLED 1960 UPRISING AGAINST RHEE GOVERNMENT, HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN PERIODS FOR ANTI-GOVERNMENT MANIFESTATIONS BY STUDENTS AND OTHER OPPOSITION GROUPS. GIVEN TENSION SURROUNDING ARREST OF KIM TAE-CHUNG AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN MYONGDONG AFFAIR, PLUS THE FACT THAT EASTER AND APRIL 19 FELL ON SUCCEEDING DAYS THIS YEAR, ROKG WAS PREPARED FOR POSSIBILITY OPPOSITION ACTIVITY AND THROUGH A SERIES OF ADROIT MOVES PREEMPTED THE FIELD AND THE PERIOD PASSED VIRTUALLY WITHOUT INCIDENT.

2. FIRST ELEMENTS ROKG PLAN WERE DEFENSIVE. CLASSES WERE
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SUSPENDED AT SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR FOUR DAYS BEGINNING

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APRIL 17 OSTENSIBLY TO GIVE STUDENTS TIME TO PREPARE STUDY
ASSIGNMENTS. OTHER UNIVERSITIES WERE INSTRUCTED TO FOLLOW SUIT
OR TO SCHEDULE MID-TERM EXAMINATIONS FOR WEEK OF APRIL 19 TO
OCCUPY STUDENTS. POLICE SURVEILLANCE OF CAMPUSES, CEMETERY
WHERE 1960 STUDENTS BURIED, AND OTHER LIKELY VENUES FOR
DEMONSTRATIONS, WAS ALSO INTENSIFIED.

3. WITH RESPECT TO CHRISTIANS, EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE
TRADITIONALLY HELD ON NAMSAN HILL WAS ORDERED MOVED TO YOI
ISLAND NEAR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHERE CROWDS MORE EASILY CONTROLLED.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, DEPARTING FROM PAST PRACTICE, SERVICE

WAS ORGANIZED BY CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN BUSINESSMEN'S
ASSOCIATION RATHER THAN NCCK TO ENSURE THAT IT DID NOT HAVE
POLITICAL CONTENT OR TONE. CROWD ESTIMATED AT 300,000 ATTENDED
THIS PURELY RELIGIOUS CEREMONY. WHILE SUNRISE SERVICE UNDERWAY
AT YOI ISLAND, ELEVEN WOMEN INCLUDING MRS. KIM TAE CHUNG, MRS.
YUN PO-SUN AND WIVES OF THOSE IMPRISONED FOR PARTICIPATION IN
MYONGDONG AFFAIR GATHERED IN FRONT OF SEOUL PRISON TO PRAY AND
SING HYMNS. POLICE DISPERSED THEM AFTER 30 MINUTES. WIVES'
SERVICE WAS COVERED BY AP, TIME PHOTOGRAPHER AND SEVERAL JAPANESE
NEWSPAPERS.

4. ON APRIL 19, POLICE ON DUTY AT CEMENTERY WHERE STUDENTS
KILLED IN 1960 UPRISING ARE BURIED ENGAGED IN BRIEF
STRUGGLE WITH SMALL GROUP OF DEMOCRATIC UNITY PARTY (DUP)
MEMBERS LED BY YONG IL-TONG AND PREVENTED THEM FROM UNFURLING
BANNER COMMEMORATING STUDENT STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY. THIS MINOR
EVENT AT CEMETERY WAS COVERED BY CBS TV CREW.

5. AS REPORTED, REFTEL, SECOND SESSION OF KIM CHI-HA
TRIAL SET FOR APRIL 20 ALSO POSTPONED UNTIL MAY 18 PRESUMABLY
ON GROUNDS IT WOULD BE UNDULY PROVOCATIVE TO STUDENTS
DURING THIS PERIOD.

6. ROKG NOT ONLY HEADED OFF OPPOSITION, IT ALSO TOOK
OFFENSIVE, MOVING TO APPROPRIATE APRIL 19 ANNIVERSARY OF STUDENT
UPRISING FOR ITS OWN. PRESIDENT PARK SENT WREATH TO BE PLACED
ON TOMB OF STUDENTS, AND CABINET MEMBERS VISITED CEMETERY TO PAY
RESPECTS. KEY NOTE OF GOVERNMENT'S DAY WAS SET BY DEPUTY PRIME
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MINISTER NAM TOK-U IN SPEECH AT CITIZEN'S HALL CEREMONY
IN WHICH SPIRIT OF APRIL 19 UPRISING WAS EQUATED TO IDEALS OF
YUSHIN AND STUDENTS ADMONISHED TO WORK FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY
AND NATIONAL SECURITY WHICH MORE SERIOUSLY THREATENED SINCE FALL
OF INDOCHINA TO COMMUNISTS YEAR AGO. THIS THEME ECHOED IN
STATEMENTS FROM DRP AND YUCHONGHOE SPOKESMEN AND IN SIMILAR
CEREMONIES IN OTHER CITIES. ON QUIET SNU CAMPUS, HISTORICAL
HOTBED OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT LED SMALL

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GROUP OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS IN PLACING WREATH ON CAMPUS
MONUMENT TO STUDENTS.

7. IN ADDITION TO WIVES PRAYER MEETING AT SEOUL PRISON AND
MINOR SKIRMISH WITH DUP PARTY AT DEMETERY, NDP PRESIDENT
KIM YONG SAM ADDED MINUTE DISCORDANT NOTE WHEN HE TOOK
DIFFERENT TACK BY CALLING ON PEOPLE TO REMEMBER THE COURAGE AND
SACRIFICE OF THE STUDENTS AND TO RENEW THIER DETERMINATION TO
FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY. WIRE SERVICES HAVE REPORTED AND CONFIRMED
PRIVATELY TO US THAT DURING VISIT TO APRIL 19 STUDENT CEMETERY KIM AL
SO
DEMANDED REPEAL EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE AND RELEASE OF
EMERGENCY MEASURE PRISONERS.

(COMMENT: KIM ALREADY UNDER INDICTMENT FOR SIMILAR OFFENSE
LAST FALL.) LOCAL PRESS HAD MADE NO REFERENCE TO STATEMENT ON
EMERGENCY MEASURE HOWEVER, AND SEVERAL LOCAL PRESS AND
POLITICAL CONTACTS, INCLUDING KIM'S SECRETARY, DISCLAIM ANY
KNOWLEDGE OF KIM'S DEMANDS.

8. COMMENT: ROKG SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATED THROUGH FIRST DAYS
OF TRADITIONAL SPRING SEASON OF UNREST THROUGH SERIES OF
ADROIT MOVES WHICH PREEMPTED FIELD FROM STUDENT AND CHRISTIAN
OPPOSITIONISTS ALREADY GREATLY WEAKENED BY ARREST OF MAJOR
LEADERS AND TIGHT POLICE SURVEILLANCE. ALTHOUGH STUDENTS AND
CHRISTIAN OPPOSITIONISTS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY TRY TO KEEP UP SOME
MOMENTUM AND EXPOSURE TO FOREIGN PRESS THOUGHOUT REMAINDER
SPRING, WE DO NOT FORESEE ANY SITUATION DEVELOPING THAT THE
ALERT AND WELL PREPARED AUTHORITIES CAN'T HANDLE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, STUDENTS, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SEOUL02914
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760148-1110
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760443/aaaabkeq.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SEOUL 2876
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 MAY 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <21 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
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04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EASTER AND ANNIVERSARY OF 1960 STUDENT UPRISING VIRTUALLY UNMARKED BY OPPOSITION ACTIVITY
TAGS: PINT, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006